CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

3 JUL 1968

D/OSR

The Honorable Paul Nitze
Deputy Secretary of Defense
Washington, D. C.

Dear Paul:

This responds to your request of a few weeks ago for a CIA comment on the feasibility of your Greater-Than-Expected Soviet Threat. The results of our review are summarized in the attachment. Very broadly, we agree that the Soviets could possibly attempt to achieve a threat of this nature, but that for various reasons -- economic, military and technological -- it is practically out of the question that they would elect to do so. Even if such a course were pursued, it is unlikely that all program schedules could be met in the time frame stipulated.

A Soviet effort to accomplish the GTET posture would require -- beginning about now -- a substantial reordering of national priorities in favor of military programs. To be successful, several major weapons research and development programs would have to go forward with minimum problems and time slippages. Moreover, it would be bound to exacerbate political divisions within the leadership and it would create major new economic disruptions. We would expect to detect a military policy shift of this magnitude well in advance of the achievement of the GTET capability.

DRAFT

3 JUL 1968

If there are questions concerning the attached comments, I would encourage that they be resolved by working level contacts that have been established. We are also prepared to examine the cost implications of the GTET if you would find it useful. This will require more complete program definition and should probably await completion of the remaining sections of the NIPP. You may wish to have your staff deal directly with Bruce Clarke on this.

CIA COMMENTS ON THE GREATER-THAN-EXPECTED SOVIET THREAT

The statistical terminology used to relate this threat to the USIB National Intelligence projections for planning might be misleading to some readers. A combination of the high NIPP forces represents what the intelligence community considers to be -- in itself -- a greater-than-expected threat. We do not, of course, believe that the USSR is absolutely constrained to this level by economics or technology, but to go significantly above the NIPP high levels to test the adequacy of US assured destruction forces represents a special, non-estimative, situation. It seems to us unnecessary to attempt to relate such a force to agreed intelligence judgments in terms of probability.

The details of weapons systems characteristics used to structure the GTET are in most cases similar to systems charcteristics discussed in National Intelligence Estimates or defined in National Intelligence Projections for Planning. Except in a few cases we believe that these are consistent with the levels of technology that the Soviets either have now available, or may reach, in the time frame postulated.

DRAFT

3 JUL 1968

As new evidence is received and the estimate cycle for NIPP-68 progresses we expect that modifications will be made in the systems and force levels projected in NIPP-67. The GTET may require similar adjustments. In some cases we believe the USSR may achieve a particular capability somewhat sooner than the GTET gives them credit for; in others we think there might be a time phasing or resource problem between the time a particular technological level is reached and the time specific systems can be produced and deployed in the quantities specified in the GTET. We address these points in the following comments:

ICBM Launchers:

a. Footnote "g" on Table 3 gives the SS-11 retrofit missile a CEP of 0.25 nautical miles starting in 1976. We believe that it may be possible for the Soviets to achieve this accuracy by about 1972.

b. The SS-Z-2 solid propellant ICBM might become part of the operational force by mid-1969 with the deployment of some 20 fixed launchers. We believe this system will have a single warhead delivery capability when initially deployed. Table 9 shows operational deployment of the SS-Z-2 with a two MIRV

DRAFT

3 JUL 1968

capability beginning in 1972.

C. We also believe that a mobile version of the SS-Z-2 system could be deployed in 1970, whereas Table 9 shows this capability in 1972. ?

The GTET projections for both the SS-11 and ^ are much too low. We carry a minimum of 640 launchers at the present time, and believe the ultimate force may reach as high as 700.

Fractional Orbital Bombardment System Launchers:

Soviet testing activities during the past year, involving both FOBS and low apogee ~~depressed~~ ICBM ~~type~~ trajectories will probably result in changes in the projected deployment numbers, timing, and system characteristics,

(continued next page)

DRAFT

8 JUL 1968

compared to NIPP-67. A true FOBS system does not yet appear to be available for deployment this year, but could be fully tested by sometime in 1969. On the other hand, the Soviets may have a deboosted low trajectory ICBM ready to begin deployment in the near future. These systems will be discussed in greater detail in NIE 11-8-68 and NIPP-68.

Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles:

We recommend that an explanatory footnote be added to explain the assumptions about "on line" SLBM launchers in relation to the total force. This was discussed with OSD systems analysts, and we feel should be made clear to other readers.

Independently Targeted Missile Warheads:

The projected characteristics and deployment dates for the Soviets are judged to technically feasible. However, although the combination of the MIRV warhead threat and the ABM threat on the deployment schedules indicated in the GTET would present the Soviets with demands for nuclear materials and warhead fabrication capacity on an unprecedented scale. This point is addressed more fully in the later paragraph on total force loadings.

~~TOP SECRET~~

DRAFT

3 JUL 1968

Interceptors:

The Soviets have continued to retain older model fighters in service longer than expected. The numbers of Fresco, Farmer, and Flashlight included in the GTET actually are slightly less than the expected force levels. This seems to be a departure from the ground rules stated for the GTET.

The GTET also makes no mention of substantial numbers of TAF fighters available for defensive duty. Although these aircraft are not included in the strategic defense forces, Soviet air defense capabilities would be improved by the use of the TAF fighter forces in an air defense role.

Airborne Warning and Control System:

Recent evidence suggests that a Soviet AWAC system will possibly be brought into service before 1970. The GTET deployment levels might therefore be reached ~~up to~~ a year earlier than indicated.

Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems:

Of all the strategic programs specified in the GTET, we feel that the projected deployment levels of the ABM-Z-1 and ABM-2 are the most unlikely to be pursued by

~~TOP SECRET~~

DRAFT

8 JUL 1968

the Soviets. For the USSR to develop, produce, deploy and operate forces of this size on the time schedule projected would require a massive increment of resources to an already large and cumbersome mix of strategic defensive weapons. Moreover, in view of the estimated limitations of Soviet ABM technology in this time frame - compared to the developing US penetration threat - we consider it even more unlikely that they would choose to deploy on this scale until a more sophisticated system could be developed. We also feel that the USSR is probably limited in its capabilities to develop the computer technology and programming software and to produce the necessary numbers of computers to deploy on the schedules and in the quantity that would be required.

Nuclear Weapons Force Loading

While the feasibility of the GTET forces cannot be denied on the basis of our knowledge of nuclear materials availability, we have serious doubts that the weapons loading for the GTET forces could be accomplished in conjunction with the high NIPP projections in other forces. The availability of sufficient plutonium and the industrial capacity to produce the required weapons mix would be particularly questionable. During the same period that

3 JUL 1968

about 15,000 new warheads will be needed for ABM and MIRV's, the surface-to-air missile systems and the theater forces will be generating requirements for about 13,000 more. Simultaneous pursuit of all these programs could fix Soviet plutonium requirements at or above NIPP high projections of its availability under what would seem likely assumptions about the preferred mix of weapons. New production reactors could be constructed but might not be able to match time requirements when construction, irradiation, cooling, separation and fabrication times are considered.